

Disposition of Remains Report: Iceland

March 11, 2016

Part I.

Country: Iceland

Part II. U.S. Embassy or Consulate Information

U.S. Embassy Reykjavik, Iceland
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Phone: +354 595-2200
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[Consular Information Sheet, Public Announcement or Travel Warning](#)
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Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland (official), Roman Catholic, Asatru (Pagan), Buddhist, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Russian Orthodox, Islam, and Mormon.

Regular Religious Services are provided by Lutheran Churches every Sunday and also by the Roman Catholic church in Reykjavik.

Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in the Host Country:

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik, Iceland assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

Utfararthjonusta Davids Osvaldssonar, ehf.
Saevidarsund 11
104 Reykjavik
Tel: [354] 551-3485 or 553-6699
After Hour Tel: [354] 896-8284
E-mail: funeralhome@simnet.is

Utfararthjonusta Islands
Sudurhlid 35, Fossvogur
105 Reykjavik
Tel: [354] 581-3300
Website: www.utforin.is
E-mail: utforin@utforin.is

Utfararstofa Kirkjugardanna
Vesturhlid 2, Fossvogur
105 Reykjavik
Tel: [354] 551-1266
After Hours Tel: [354] 821-5131
Website: www.utfor.is
E-mail: utfor@utfor.is

Utfararthjonustan Runar Geirmundsson
Fjardarasi 25
110 Reykjavik
Tel: [354] 567-9110 or 896-8638
Website: www.utfarir.is

Part V. Profile of services available in the host country regarding preparation and shipment of remains: The purpose of this section is to describe:

- a. An autopsy is required under Icelandic law when the cause of death is not easily verifiable and/or the death is a result of suspicious circumstances. After an autopsy has been performed the body is turned over to the mortician.
- b. Embalming is not performed in Iceland so decisions about disposition of remains must be made quickly. Many foreigners who die in Iceland are shipped to other countries for burial, so the local funeral homes (especially the ones in Reykjavik) are familiar with the process. Working in conjunction with a funeral home in the United States, they make all arrangements concerning preparation and shipment of remains. Costs of repatriation range from \$2000-\$6000 depending on the final destination in the United States.

- c. Certain forms and certificates are required to ship remains to the United States. It is unlikely that remains will ever be shipped during a weekend or on a holiday.

Shipment of remains to the United States is organized by the local funeral home. The burden to pay all fees associated with repatriation of remains is borne by the next of kin (NOK). The cost of transporting a body to the United States is between \$3000 and \$6000; the cost to transport ashes is between \$2000 and \$4000. Cremations are usually only performed on Tuesdays.

If local burial is desired, the cost is approximately \$900 plus the cost of a grave site.

- e. Sýslumaðurinn í Vík is the local authority in charge of issuing licenses to operate funeral services
- f. The doctor handling the individual at the time of death issues a notice of death which is used to issue a death certificate with systumadur.

- (1) **Maximum Period Before Burial.** State whether local or national laws and regulations require interment within a specific period of time.

Interment is usually performed within 8 days but can be delayed for reasons such as autopsy, family circumstances.

- (2) **Embalming.** Embalming is not performed in Iceland

- (3) **Cremation.** Icelandic law permits cremation once any requirement to complete an autopsy has been met; autopsies are always done in cases of death outside a hospital. There is one cremation facility in Iceland, located in the capital city of Reykjavik, and services are equivalent to what can be found in the United States. exist locally.

Cremation can only take place in crematorium that have been authorized by the Ministry of Interior and that have received license to operate from local sanitary authorities. Authorization from the Ministry has to be obtained on localization and function of the crematorium before building is licensed.

- (4) **Caskets and Containers.** Caskets and containers available locally meet the requirements for shipment out of the country. Hermetically sealed caskets are available in case of death from a communicable disease.

- (5) **Exportation of Remains.**

Regulations number 668- 10 July 2007

If the remains (ash) are not buried after the cremation the urn must be placed in closed, locker in the crematorium. If the ash should be sent to other places the staff must ensure that the remains are being properly and safely packed. The recipients must acknowledge, in writing, the reception of the remains. Recipients can be NOK, representing prior, staff from funeral home or directors, or crematorium's staff, who are also responsible for the disposal of ash.

If a corpse has to be transported from one region to another or to another country, a special coffin and/or bag, specially made for this purpose and that meets transportation requirements is required. No one is allowed to transport a corpse inside or outside of the country unless it's placed in an approved airtight metal container which has been placed in a secure wooden coffin, and that has been

placed in a secure way. The coffin must be accompanied with an authorization and a declaration from MD stating that there is no danger of contagious disease.

If the corpse is suspected to be contaminated it will be treated accordingly and in accordance with local laws and authorities.

(6) **Costs.**

The next-of-kin or legal representative of the deceased is responsible for paying all fees including outstanding hospital bills, mortuary costs, funeral home expenses and shipping fees. The U.S. Embassy Iceland encourages next-of-kin or legal representatives to send payment directly to the funeral home of choice. When this is not possible, American Citizen Services at the U.S. Embassy Iceland may be able to pay vendors from money deposited by the next-of-kin or legal representative into a Department of State Overseas Citizens Services Trust.

Costs below are illustrative only and represent an average at the current exchange rate. Actual costs may vary.

Costs of local interment is estimated to be \$5,000 USD

Cost of preparation for shipment (including containers), and shipping costs by air to return non-cremated remains to the United States can be as much at \$10,000 USD.

Cost for shipment of ashes is estimated to be \$4,000 USD.

(7) **Exhumation and Shipment.**

The District Commissioner of Siglufjörður, in Northern Iceland, authorizes exhumation and transferring of remains inside the graveyard or inside the country to another location. He has to obtain prior authorization from local authorities and the Bishop of Iceland.

(8) **Autopsies:**

An autopsy is required under Icelandic law when the cause of death is not easily verifiable and/or the death is a result of suspicious circumstances or occurs outside of a hospital. After an autopsy has been performed the body is turned over to the mortician.